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THE BALL.

Stated in a

DIALOGUE

BETWIXT

A Prude and a Coquet,

Laſt Maſquerade Night, the 12th of *May*.

Where ſprightly Females, to the Middle bare,
Trip lightly o'er the Ground, and friſk in Air;
Whoſe pliant Limbs in various Poſtures move,
And twine, and bound, as in the Rage of Love:
Where the rank Matrons, dancing to the Pipe,
Jig with their Bums, and are for Action ripe;
Full Brimmers to their ſuddel'd Noſes thruſt,
Brimmers, the laſt Provocatives of Luſt.

DRYD. Juv. Sat. 6th & 11th

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THE BALL.

Enter HILARIA, *a Coquet, dreſs'd for the Maſquerade, to* LUCRETIA, *a Prude, at her Tea-Table.*

Lucr. O JESU! —Coz.—why this fantaſtick Dreſs?
I fear ſome Frenzy does your Head poſſeſs;
That thus you ſweep along a *Turkiſh* Tail,
And let that Robe o'er Modeſty prevail.

Hilar. Dear Madam! — why this Wonder, and that (Squall?
To Night Count *H---gg--r* does give a Ball:
If of a Habit you ſeem thus afraid,
How will you venture to the Maſquerade?

Lucr. Who? — me? — O Heaven! how ſhall I make (Reply?
When, at the Thought alone, I ſwoon—I die:
My Blood impetuous to my Face does fluſh,
And dyes my Features with a Crimſon Bluſh;
To my whole Frame Diſorders does impart;
Qualms and Convulſions ſeize my Nerves and Heart:

Far from my Ears that odious Word convey,
Or elſe my Winding-ſheet with haſte diſplay ;
In ev'ry filthy Syllable I find
Rapes, Satyrs, Bulls, and Goats, to ſhock my Mind.

Hilar. Prodigious this imaginary Fear !
If that the Thing itſelf you cannot bear,
The Word is innocent, — that you may ſafely hear.

Lucr. The Thing ! — and Innocence ! — how you unite
A Fiend of Darkneſs with a Child of Light ;
To what a Height of Confidence we're grown,
When thus the Thing itſelf we bare-fac'd own ;
O ! — let not theſe Deluſions thus prevail,
Or at the Devil's Market ſet your ſelf to ſale.

Hilar. How grave you are ! — I'll take you tho' to task,
Unleſs at Home you lay aſide your Mask ;
For none wou'd wear in jeſt that ſerious Face,
But to enjoy Life's Sweets with better Grace.

Lucr. Couſin, explain ; — I know not what you mean
By hinting ; — as I were not, what I ſeem ;
My Heart's chaſte Thoughts my Tongue has ever ſpoke,
Nor have I any Secrets want a Cloak.

Hillar. Ben't angry then ; — but tete a tete let's hear,
What Crime does in the *Maſquerade* appear.

Lucr. O Goddeſs, *Prudence !* — whither art thou flown,
From this vile Age, and moſt abandon'd Town ;

Thy

Thy Siſter *Virtue* too deſerts us quite,
Whilſt Clear-Day boaſts the Infamy of Night.
Why in this naughty Veſtment are you ſeen?
Dreſs'd up for Love, with ſuch an Air and Mien,
As if you wou'd commence *Sultana-Queen*:
Inſtead of flying Faithleſs Man's falſe Arts,
You run into their Way of gaining Hearts;
At Midnight-Balls no Love you muſt refuſe,
And ev'n the Form of Pray'rs and Vows excuſe.
Quickly then theſe enchanting Revels ſhun,
Or all my Caution's vain, and you're undone.

Hilar. Since conqu'ring Virtue does my Conduct guard;
Of harmleſs Mirth, why ſhou'd I be debarr'd?
Vice I defy! — nor will I ſtand aloof,
But ſhew myſelf againſt Temptation proof.

Lucr. So much of Female Fortitude you boaſt,
You think, your Honour never can be loſt;
But may find both precarious to your Coſt.
In Armour thus young Warriors do confide,
And think the Metal good, tho' never try'd:
But when the ſharpen'd Steel they dare controul,
A little Dagger makes a — mighty Hole.

Hilar. A groundleſs Fear! — nor will I be deny'd,
What's gay and innocent with ſuch a Guide;
Shall falſe, preſuming Man my Thoughts perplex?
No! — I was born to plague the ſilly Sex:
Methods there are to match their ſharpeſt Tricks.

Their

Their fond Credulity I'll fret and teize,
And ſow'r and ſweeten 'em juſt as I pleaſe ;
Now ſeem to yield, — now fly, — now faintly ſtrive —
Drop in their Arms ; — then like a Duck I'll dive.
Thus oft deceiv'd, they can no longer doubt,
That we're a Riddle, never yet made out ;
Loſt in the Maze, they'll cry ; — we own indeed,
Woman's a Language Man can never read.

Lucr. You talk this prettily, upon my Word,
Some ſmall Remarks my preſent Thoughts afford ;
Your Similies are charmingly apply'd,
But pray obſerve 'em on the other Side :
Your cunning Duck in Policy may fail,
And as ſhe dives, be ſnapp'd up by the Tail ;
E'en Madam *Sphynx*, (who cou'd dark Riddles plot)
Met one, who into her *Enigma* got :
To Man, what Language ſo myſterious yet ?
But back—or—forwards he cou'd penetrate.

Hilar. I vow all your Remarks are out of Joint,
And never touch the moſt material Point ;
Suppoſe that Man to Virtue does lay Siege,
He to ſurrender can't our Sex oblige ;
His ſtanding Forces may attack in Form,
Sap, Mine, and Batter ;— nay proceed to ſtorm :
All this we ſuffer, but to make us Sport,
If we keep cloſe, — he cannot gain the Fort ;
Baffl'd at laſt, he's forc'd to a Retreat,
Brighter our Glory ſhines by his Defeat.

Lucr. Your Arguments are Froth, — ſay what you can;
You talk as unexperienc'd in Man:
Proud of ſome ſmall Succeſs, you dare rely
Upon your ſelf; — Woman to win muſt fly,
Or at th' inſulting Victor's Mercy lie.
Perhaps of Courage, I may boaſt my Share,
Yet wou'd not wage with Man unequal War;
The Fort of Chaſtity does ſhew ſome Strength,
It's Foſſe too of goodly Depth and Length;
But then if Man produces one Great Gun,
The Fort's demoliſh'd, and our Sex undone;
The ſmalleſt Breach made in the Cover'd-Way
Admits their whole Artillery to play;
And if the Vant-Guard once Admittance find,
The Rear will not be idle — tho' behind.

Hilar. Too far into the Depth of War we wade;
But what's this Trifling to the *Maſquerade?*
Triumphant there you'll own our Sex remains,
All Mirth and Innocence without Love's Pains:
It is impoſſible, in ſuch a Place
And Company—for Sin to ſhew it's Face;
So vaſt the Crowd, ſo num'rous are the Lights,
That if we ſlip,— how ſoon we're put to rights;
If I'm attack'd, — I freely jeſt unknown;
And when I pleaſe — but *Preſto* — and I'm gone;
I Chat, — I Laugh, — I Dance, — with Coquet's Art,
Play over all my Tricks; — yet keep my Heart.

Lucr. How ſtrait and ſlippery a Path they tread,
Who wou'd plant Prudence in a young Girl's Head;

Still on your Strength or Conduct you inſiſt,
And, obſtinate in Ignorance, perſiſt;
You wander in a dark and ſtormy Night,
Yet truſt an *Ignis-Fatuus* for Light;
Take me your Guide, and let me ſet you right.

Hilar. Proceed then, that my Errors I may ſee;
And whilſt you moralize — I'll drink ſome Tea.

Lucr. You ſeem to think the *Maſquerade* a Place,
Varniſh'd with Modeſty, and ſtuff'd with Grace;
From Time, and Place, and Company you bring
Strange Arguments to palliate the Thing;
Now as I take the Hint — it is allow'd —
Odd Matters may be finiſh'd in a Crowd;
Throng'd on all Sides — if mask'd, you're ſtill alone;
Secure and pleas'd they act — who act unknown:
Tho' e'er ſo arm'd againſt the Dart of Sin,
If the leaſt Cranny's found — it will get in.

Hilar. How learnedly you talk upon this Head,
I vow, my Dear — you're very deeply read.

Lucr. From Speculation my Experience ſprings,
Not Practice, — but the Theory of Things;
Let me reduce to Method what I've ſaid,
And ſketch an Ev'ning at the *Maſquerade*;
I think I ſee you into Ruin ruſh,
Forwards (to be undone) you thruſt and puſh;
Where odious Fellows taint you with their Breath,
And hawl — and pull — and ſqueeze it juſt to Death:

Each

Each flutt'ring Fop will whiſper in your Ear
Such filthy Stuff; O Gad; — and you muſt hear;
If to ſome private Corner you retire,
They follow ſtill, — and ſwear 'tis your Deſire;
Crowds of deluding Fiends about you ſwarm,
In all you ſee, feel, taſte, there's ſome curs'd Charm,
Jelly provokes, — and brisk *Champagne* does warm:
The Muſick makes you gay, and Love inſpires,
Whilſt Chat and Motion blow up hidden Fires;
Some wanton Youth your tott'ring Virtue plyes,
He hears you ſigh — and ſees your Bubbies riſe;
He preſſes on, — who can her Heart command,
When Love triumphant at the Door does ſtand?
Tho' in a Mask, — no Secrets you'll conceal,
Once Love's prevailing Article you feel;
Where are you then? — I hear Temptation call —
I ſee — alas! — how eaſily you fall —.

Hil. How feelingly you ſpeak; — but what you teach,
Farther I think than Theory does reach;
Such Depth of Knowledge Practice does require,
And to improve — I'll to the *Ball* retire;
Where round that little World I'll freely roam,
As innocent as — Madam here at Home;
Nor do I Loſs of Reputation fear,
Tho' I may meet the gay *Philander* there;
Proof againſt all his Arts — Good-night, my Dear.

[*Exit.*

Lucr.---How!---meet *Philander* there!—I ſhall run mad,
That is the fatal — only Blow I dread:

Falſe

False and perfidious Man! — so quickly chang'd! —
Has he not sworn? — and shan't I be reveng'd? —
I'll tear her Eyes—his Heart— who waits?—who's there?

Enter BETTY.

Get me, my *Domine*, — and *Tom* a Chair,
Whilst such sage Lectures to her Youth I give,
She steals my Man; — who can that Crime forgive?
Let them who never felt Love's pleasing Smart,
Preach Patience now; — that Stranger to my Heart:
Where's *Prud'ry* too? — a formal idle Guest,
On whose Foundation Women vainly rest;
But Love makes us, — and it — and all the World a Jest.
With Vengeance arm'd, Fate's worst and best I'll try,
Philander lose, — or see *Hilaria* die.

[*Exit.*

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FINIS.